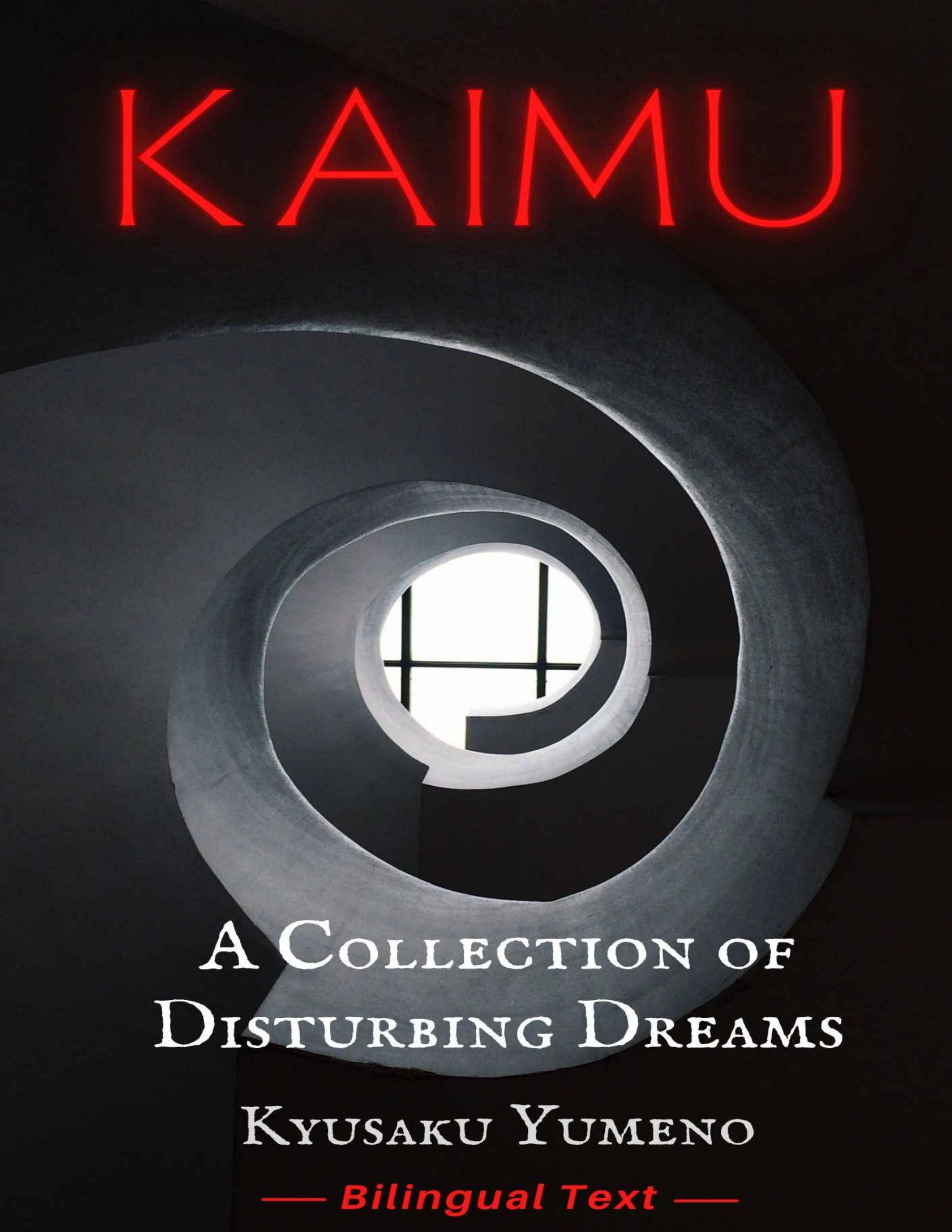
# KAIMU



## A Collection of Disturbing Dreams

Kyusaku Yumeno

Bilingual Text

# Kaimu

## *A Collection of Disturbing Dreams*

**Kyusaku Yumeno**

Translated by J. D. Wisgo

**Kaimu: A Collection of Disturbing Dreams**

Original Japanese text (  ) by Kyusaku Yumeno (  ), taken from Aozora Bunko.

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# Translator’s Introduction

Yumeno Kyusaku is best known for his unusual, eerie, and downright disturbing stories. The first book in this series, *The Spirit Drum*, is Yumeno’s debut work that gained him fame in the public eye, a novella about how a cursed musical instrument wreaks havoc on a pair of families across several generations.

In the second book of this series, *Kaimu: A Collection of Disturbing Dreams*, we see a different side of Yumeno in the form of a handful of short stories, each representing an unusual dream. While “The Spirit Drum” builds tension and mystery over time, these surreal tales instead use vivid imagery and unusual settings to squeeze much into a small package that focuses more on atmosphere than story. When reading these pieces I can’t help but recall the classic TV series The Twilight Zone, which featured eerie, yet memorable stories in a short format.

I cannot say whether these stories were inspired by Yumeno’s actual dreams, but regardless they show an interesting side of a unique author whose name happens to mean “the eccentric dreamer”. Published in 1931, only five years after Yumeno’s debut work, these dream fragments hint at certain elements later emplolyed in *Dogura Magura*, his most famous work—a long, cryptic novel released in 1935 that is said to make anyone who reads it insane.

While the original Japanese of these stories is by no means easy, their short lengths make them good candidates for reading practice, which is why I have included these stories in both English-only as well as parallel Japanese/English formats. I’ve left the furigana

reading hints on the original Japanese text, rendered in parenthesis due to limitations with E-readers. Even with the reading hints, you may have to look up some characters, but I think the effort will be well worth it. In the few places where a character or word doesn't appear in a dictionary, I would suggest to keep reading and you should be able to eventually put things together using context. Keep in mind Yumeno's writing is considered to be a bit tricky to fully understand, even for native speakers.

In the parallel Japanese/English versions of the stories in the second part of the book I have included a series of translations notes. These are intended to explain the literal meaning of the original text and talk about translation decisions in key areas. The notes can be used by students of Japanese or curious readers simply wanting to get a deeper understanding of the stories.

I hope you enjoy the mysterious world Yumeno presents us in these stories.

— J. D. Wisgo

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# The Foundry

It is a frost-covered morning when light begins to accumulate solemnly at the steel factory.

It is the time when the massive crucible, where coke has burned continually for the last few days, glows bright red like a setting sun in the darkness of the foundry.

It is a period of several minutes when the needle of the boiler's pressure gauge shudders silently beneath the yellow lights, exceeding two hundred pounds.

For the briefest of moments a terrible stillness can be felt permeating throughout the soot-caked building, the kind of stillness found thousands of meters underground.

This moment of utter silence hints at an incomprehensible, ominous premonition…as if this very foundry is on the verge of rupturing…

I leisurely cross my arms. Sneering at the absurd, unimaginable premonition deep in my mind, I gaze up at a window in the high ceiling. I look up at a chimney belching black smoke into the blue sky. Shaking my head vigorously back and forth, I'm struck with vertigo as if the diagonally slanted surface of the chimney, brightly reflecting the olive-colored light of the rising sun, is about to topple over onto me at any moment.

Because of my father’s sudden death, I inherited this foundry despite being an inexperienced graduate fresh out of college…and I’ve just been brought here to lead the work personally for the first time in my life, anticipating the insults and curses of the workers towards their young, neophyte boss…

But my indomitable spirit pushes away that ominous premonition into a place deep, deep in my mind. Holding a cigarette lengthwise in my mouth with a vaguely smug attitude I walk around, observing the white breaths of the workers at their assigned stations.

Before me a giant flywheel grins like a dark rainbow.

Beyond that, in the faint darkness remaining from last night, gears of various sizes spin, countless teeth meshing together.

With the grey arm of a piston rod jutting out…

A hydraulic rivet gun staring up at the attic…

One leg of a steam hammer being raised…

Everything remains stubbornly silent as if in wait of my orders, prepared to fully utilize terrific, supernatural forces and a certainty born from the principles of physics.

A high-pitched whistle screams out somewhere…Is it the sound of steam escaping from the lips of a valve? Or a noise resounding deep in my head?

Something powerful runs down my spine. My right hand rises impulsively.

The foreman nods and goes away.

…Slowly…extremely slowly…all of the machines clustered together in the foundry begin to gradually awaken.

Steam begins spraying from all corners of the foundry.

Then, a moment later…various unseen hallucinations of steel begin to spiral up around me in unison: humans…lunatics…super-beings…wild animals…fierce beasts…monsters…giants…with the great roar of steel paying no mind to any of those…Cruel, cold-blooded moans of jet black fly through every space, instantly luring even the strongest mind into a delusion of fear and death.

The echoes of spirits being ridiculed, the spirits of countless woman and child workers who have been torn apart, shredded, or beaten to death…

The voice of someone cursing the skull of that old worker who was recently crushed…

The sound of someone mocking the well-built man who had both of his legs broken long ago…

The hellish cacophony that cares only for the great battle between steel and fire, ignoring all life with a cold stare of indifference.

The suffocating screams of a circular saw from a distant wood mill cut through my neck and ears, swaying each and every hair on my head. The sounds also slice through the fingers, arms, and foreheads of the young workers. Even now, that blood spray remains as a black spot on the base of a wooden beam.

My father was considered by the community to be a lunatic. It was because he was an ugly, uneducated old man who glared at the world with savage steel-colored eyes who, once began, worked day and night without rest. He was this foundry's burden and its pride, and at the same time an unending menace towards several steel foundries.

That's why in this foundry there is never a single machine with the experience of losing a part of itself, let alone its existence. Bloody screams and sneers penetrate every inch of the black walls and ceiling. That is how passionate the workers are in this foundry. That is how sincere the machines are in this foundry.

Moreover, to dominate everything, to despise every little thing—the iron, the blood, the flesh, and the souls—to make everything curse and fight amongst themselves like useless junk…and to create afresh a great sneer of iron…*that* was the ambition of my late father. And yet, it wasn't enough to satisfy me, to even draw a smile from me…

"What's the big deal? I'll show you. This work is nothing but child's play…"

Arms crossed, I begin to walk slowly. I wonder how many more souls I will have to sacrifice to the steel…as I gradually become accustomed to the terrible, deafening screams in this absurdly majestic foundry…grinning as I imagine the most brutal of things, building up to my favorite moment of ecstasy…

“Oh, ch-chief it’s you.”

The voice, something close to a scream, comes from behind me.

“…So we lost another person?”

That instant, a great lucidity surges through my senses. As I slowly turn around, the massive sun-like crucible hanging from a crane passes uncomfortably close to my nose, glittering brightly as it scatters white sparks in all directions, ready to ignite whatever it touches…

The light blinds me. I step onto the mold of a pump, shattering it, and jump back. Every ounce of my blood rushing into my heart, I stop when I slam into the door of a wood mill.

Five or six foundry workers run to come see me. Bowing their heads low, the workers apologize for their negligence.

My mouth gapes open as I look across at their faces…I keenly feel the cold air stinging the mild burns on their foreheads, cheeks, and noses…and I hear every last sound in the foundry jeering at me.

“Ha ha ha!”

“Hee hee hee!”

“Ho ho ho!”

“…Asshole, you deserved that!”

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# Midair

The single-wing spy plane marked with the characters “T11” began to ascend at an unbelievably sharp angle, quickly gaining distance from the green hills and plains.

“…Hey…lieutenant, you’d be best to give up on that T11 monoplane. You may not know this since you’re a new dispatch, but two people have already disappeared while flying that thing. What’s more, that plane is a two-time felon, having returned mysteriously to the ground both times without a scratch. The motor and body were completely intact but nobody wanted to fly it, so we stuffed it into the attic…So just forget about it…”

Before I knew it, both my commanding officer’s words of warning and the concerned face of my colleagues had disappeared below the stratus clouds like a century’s old event. The next moment, the deep blue summer sky expanded above my head endlessly into the distance, glittering spectacularly in the fresh morning sun.

I was good at this.

Relying on nothing but my ability to precisely inspect each and every part of a plane, a keen sense of observation of the weather, and my experiences of overcoming all kinds of danger, I had dared to take

this plane on such a sharp angle upwards simply to rebel against the superstition-like worries of my commander and colleagues…thinking to myself, “You think you can go to war with an attitude like *that*?”

And yet…as I broke through a part of the clouds that cooly flowed by, even my feelings of defiance disappeared without a trace. Then, once my altitude meter reached 2,500 meters, all that remained was the disturbingly silent buzz of my propeller and the subtle sensation of spark plugs firing in perfect timing.

*This T11 is utterly amazing.*

*How can it be so silent, even though I’ve broken 300 kilometers per hour?*

*Not to mention, on a day like this there shouldn’t be any air pockets.*

*If the clouds weren’t here, I’d be surprising everyone with some aerial acrobatics right about now.*

While I was thinking this, adjusting the rudder for a slow climb, I suddenly realized that the shadow of my plane was tracing the shapes of the clouds two or three hundred meters below my feet, rising and lowering, as the plane slid along perfectly alongside the clouds.

Seeing that, even an experienced pilot like me couldn’t help but feel an inexpressible joy. I had no choice but to wallow in the pure satisfaction that can only be attained in this place by a conqueror of the sky…as my heart throbbed quickly…and I truly felt like a kid again…

*An altitude of 2,500 meters.*

*The silent buzz of a propeller.*

*The subtle sensation of spark plugs firing in perfect timing.*

From my eyes dripped hot tears of having forgotten everything… tears of deep emotion for speeding alone through the blue sky, between the clouds and the sun…I blinked a few times behind my goggles to try and hold back the tears.

*That's when I saw it.*

In the blue sky beyond my propeller, which glittered like an enormous mirror, appeared a tiny plane that enlarged before my very eyes…

I was astounded. It all happened so suddenly I first guessed it was a trick of the eye, but as I was thinking this the black shadow quickly grew in size, and the clear shape of a monoplane emerged.

Preparing myself, I grabbed the yoke tightly.

*An altitude of 2,500 meters.*

*The silent buzz of a propeller.*

*The subtle sensation of spark plugs firing in perfect timing.*

I was shocked. Eyes wide, I held my breath. Coming towards me was a land-based spy plane identical to mine in all respects. There even seemed to be a pilot on board. I couldn't see any markings or numbers on the plane, however…

*An altitude of 2,500 meters.*

*The silent buzz of a propeller.*

*The subtle sensation of spark plugs firing in perfect timing.*

*The sky.*

*The sun.*

*A sea of clouds.*

I yelled out in surprise.

I jerked the yoke to the left to try and avoid the plane, but at the same time it turned in the same direction, showing me its dark left side while continuing to head straight towards me.

My entire body broke out in a cold sweat. *This is crazy,* I thought as I banked my plane to the right, but as if mimicking me the other plane

also banked, now showing its brightly glimmering right side, still coming right at me.

*Just like a reflection in a mirror.*

My entire body tensed up. My teeth started to rattle loudly.

Right then my plane began to tilt forward, apparently hitting a small air pocket…but at the same time the other plane also tilted forward, and in that instant…I could have sworn I saw “T11” written on it.

But the next moment, the other plane leveled out its wings just as I did, now on a direct course to smash directly into me.

*I flipped the switch…*

*…released the belt…*

*…and jettisoned from my seat.*

I fell a hundred meters without my parachute opening.

In the same posture as me, without a parachute opening, was a person falling like a bullet who looked identical to me…staring at me with an identical face…

*The endless blue sky.*

*The blinding sun.*

*The glistening yellow sea of clouds…*

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# On the Street

Tokyo, in the dead of night.

Exhausted from enjoying myself at a club, I was hobbling towards home alone, head hung low, when I suddenly looked up. Because something had suddenly brightened in the distance…

But the next moment, after I jumped aside in surprise from an ear-piercing siren, a single car flew by like a great gust of wind…A cloud of sand and the stink of gasoline followed in its wake, and as I watched, the number 4444 and the red light quickly shrunk to nothing.

Well now…was the person in the passenger seat of that vehicle a doll? She had an unbelievably beautiful profile. I couldn't see her clothes, but her hair was tied back, shiny like a water droplet, her face covered with pure white powder, and her demeanor dead calm under the green lights…With eyes of onyx opened wide and a hint of a smile on her face, she stared directly ahead with the driver. The way she stuck out her chest and her calm attitude made her very doll-like…but just as I was thinking these thoughts another car came.

I immediately turned around to look.

The person in the passenger seat of this vehicle was a gentleman with a Panama hat. With the typical reddish face and imposing

physique of a wealthy person, he smiled and stared forward with the driver, leaning back slightly as their car sped by in front of me. The number on the car was 11111.

He was a doll! That gentleman was certainly a doll…Well now…isn't this strange…

But as I was contemplating this, I gazed at the interior of another car that was coming, my body now stiff as a board.

This time it was a Buddhist priest wearing a robe of gold brocade. A doll with a well-defined nose, like a graceful prince…Eyes slightly downcast and hands held together in prayer, he glided past me.

A chill ran down my spine. Around me was a quiet street…and the sky, filled with countless stars…

The mysteries of Tokyo in the dead of night…which I saw alone…

I sensed something approaching me, an eerie, massive, terrible thing that was unexplainable. I picked up my pace in order to get home as soon as possible.

Just then, two cars silently approached, one from the front and one from behind.

*Me and…*

*…the scene from the day of…*

*…my dream wedding.*

I began running away. I hurried to the club’s front entrance, and fell flat onto the doormat.

“Somebody help me!”

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# The Hospital

Before I realized it, I had been put inside of a sturdy iron cage. Wearing a white calico gown like a hospital patient and a white gauze wrapped around my body, I was left alone on the concrete with my arms and legs sprawled out on the floor.

I seem to be in a mental hospital.

But I didn’t panic. I simply sat there in contemplation without making a sound. It was because, having known this was a mental hospital, there was no use making a fuss. It was very clear that the more noise I made, the more trouble I would get into. To make matters worse, it was nighttime. Despite apparently being a large hospital, there were no noises whatsoever…I can’t make a fuss, I can’t get angry. No. I can’t cry and I can’t laugh. Because that would convince everyone that I was truly insane.

I slowly sat up in the middle of the concrete floor. Placing my hands upon my knees, I sat quietly with my eyes half closed, staring at the place where the steel poles of the cage were attached to the ground. I was trying to calm my mind…

Sure enough, my mind quickly settled down to a state of calm, and a great silence swept through every inch of the hospital…

That’s when it happened—someone gradually approached from the other side of the bars before me. A young man, apparently lost in thought, wearing what appeared to be a white physician’s coat, walking slowly with a *tap-tap* upon the wooden floor that was situated about a foot above where I sat. The man halted suddenly when he reached the bars. Hands in pockets and apparently gazing down at me, the man’s feet came together and stopped directly below the level of my eyes.

I slowly turned my head to look upwards.

A set of striped pants with bulging knees and a physician’s coat with dark stains came into view…But I had seen those striped pants and coat somewhere before…I closed my eyes in contemplation, but an instant later I had a sudden realization. I gazed up at his face, my eyes open wide.

His face was just what I was expecting: pale and emaciated… disheveled hair…long, unkempt beard…dark, melancholy eyes cast down…like a suffering Jesus Christ…

It was me…it was undoubtedly me, from back when I was studying in the medical bureau of this hospital.

My chest began to pound. Then, a few moments later, it gradually calmed and returned to normal.

The Milky Way flowing above the massive building standing behind this man suddenly twinkled, as if remembering something.

But at the same time, I felt as if all my questions had been answered. Indeed, I had been made a mental patient and put into this cage by my coat-wearing self who now stood outside of these bars. As a result of excessively researching his own brain, this coat-wearing version of me must have developed a mental condition, mistaken me for himself, and thrown me into this cage. Had only this “coat-wearing me” not existed, I would have never been treated like an insane person.

When I realized this, I couldn’t help but become enraged. Losing control, I stared hard at myself outside of the bars and screamed out, “Why the hell did you come here? You despicable…”

My voice reverberated loudly throughout the hospital, bouncing around as it gradually died down. However, the facial expression of me outside the bars didn’t change at all. Hands stuffed into the pockets of a physician’s coat, the man stared down at me with sorrowful eyes like Jesus, answering with a quiet, but clear voice.

“I came to see you.”

My anger only intensified.

“…There’s no need to visit me. You asshole…go home now, and get back to studying for your job!”

While listening to the echoes of my harsh voice, I had the sensation of my eyes burning with tears…without knowing why…but on the thin lips of my other self I detected a sneer, as if he had finally calmed down.

“Observing you like this *is* my job. As soon as you completely lose your mind, my research will be complete…and I think it’s almost time…”

“You devil! How dare you treat me like your plaything and try to kill me! Y-you cold-blooded…”

“Science is always cold-blooded…”

He laughed, brandishing white teeth, then suddenly looked up at the sky…as if about to say something of great import…

I went into a rage, jumping up and thrusting both hands outside the cage. I grabbed hold of the collar of his white gown and twisted it.

“…Now…you get me out…immediately…from this cage…and we can finish your research together…alright? Alright? For the sake of God…”

Hot tears choked me. I swallowed, washing the salty liquid down my throat.

Yet the coat-wearing version of myself did not resist nor try to escape. Then, while being grabbed by the gown-wearing me, he said painfully, “No way…you’re my…precious…guinea pig…I can’t let you out.”

“What…what…did you…”

“If I…let you out…my experiment will be ruined…”

I found my hands loosening up on his collar. Then I drew his face right up to me and stared intently at it.

“…What? Say that one more time!”

“It doesn’t matter how many times I say it. I have to keep you locked up in this cage until you are driven completely insane. Reporting the entire course of events is the topic of my doctoral dissertation, for the sake of the state…”

“…Alright…suit…yourself…asshole…”

But before I finished speaking, I grabbed hold of his disheveled hair and struck him right between the eyes. I took his body, now limp and dripping with blood, and thrust it away with all my might. The body made a terrible *thump* in the late night hallway, sprawling out onto the floor. He ceased all movement, as if breathing his last breath.

“That’s what you get!” I said and laughed uncontrollably.

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# Seven Seaweed Plants

I dived down quietly, oh so quietly towards the bottom of the gloomy, silvery blue ocean that stretched below the cloudy sky. I was acting on orders from the authorities to ascertain the whereabouts of the *All Last*, a ship that had sunk with a load of gold coins…

The air pressure inside of my diving suit gradually rose, and my ears began to ring. My heartbeat throbbed inside my skull with a muddled *flub-flub* sound. At the same time, I felt the silence around me deepen further…

Like the bell of a temple ringing somewhere in the distance…

Chunks of gray seaweed floated up towards the surface. Following those came a school of tiny fish, also gray, swimming upwards in an orderly line until they gradually disappeared.

My vision began to progressively darken.

Finally a true darkness fell, a darkness so thick that I couldn’t even see my own hands, and before long my heavy shoes seemed to have touched down softly onto the mud of the ocean floor.

I pulled the signaling net and notified my companions at the surface.

I began walking slowly, guided by the electric light attached to my scuba helmet. I passed over innumerable gray sand dunes formed from gentle, rounded curves.

Yet no matter how far I went, there were only the same low, round hills of sand, with no sign of even a shell in any direction, let alone a ship. What's more, after I walked a little further, I realized my surroundings were filled with a faint pale glow reminiscent of phosphorus. It was something like a desert at twilight…or the road to the land of the dead, uncertain…and eerie…

I began to quietly change direction. It was because of a premonition of some unfortunate event waiting for me on my current course…But before I finished turning, my entire body suddenly stiffened up.

Out of the corner of my eye I caught sight of a forest of extremely oddly shaped seaweed plants that had seemingly appeared out of nowhere, standing disturbingly close to me in front of the endlessly rolling sand dunes.

A forest of seaweed…varying in height from around one to three meters. Each was oval-shaped like sargassum, with a round head… and was attached to the ocean floor with thin strings tied to its roots. The plants overlapped one another and stood vertically in rows, like tombstones. In the pale phosphorescent light the black plants stood out clearly…I counted seven in total.

I was dumbfounded. Heart throbbing quickly within my chest, I slowly withdrew a few steps.

A moment later, I heard the faint sound of a human voice coming from the closest plant within the group of massive seaweed.

It was a low-pitched, hoarse voice.

“Hello there…”

I felt each and every bone in my body freeze up like ice. At the same time, despite not knowing the source of the voice, I was overtaken with the feeling of having encountered an unimaginably terrible monster, so I continued backing away, even more slowly. Then I heard a muddy, listless voice coming from a seaweed plant on the right.

“You must have come…in search of the gold coins.”

The throbbing in my chest suddenly intensified. Then it suddenly stopped without a sound…having realized that something even more terrible than a monster was glaring this way…

But then I heard a sad, gentle voice coming from the shortest, most distant plant of the group.

“We aren’t monsters. We are from the ship *All Last* that you seek… the bodies of the captain and his wife, their one child…one first mate…and three sailors. The captain is the man you just spoke to, and I am his wife. Please understand…and the one who first called to you was the first mate.”

“…Please listen to us…we three were all allies of the captain of the *All Last*,” said another worn-down voice.

“We were shot and killed by the heartless crew of the *All Last,* thrown into canvas bags, doused with turpentine and tar, our feet bound with heavy weights, and made into bait for the creatures of the sea.”

I remained silent.

“…and then…some other people fooled everyone by scattering pieces of a ship onto the waves and making it look like our ship had sunk.”

I said nothing.

“…of those, the asshole who was the lead conspirator purposefully went back to his hometown’s police station and lied about everything, saying that he was the only person who managed to survive…and telling everyone that the ship sank here…”

“It’s true! That guy…he strangled me right in front of my mother and father. I’m certain you know *full well* who he is.”

The last person spoke with the adorable, yet sad voice of a young girl. The voice likely came from within the shortest bag in the group…Then everything went dead quiet, except for the sound of the voice of soft weeping permeating throughout the sea.

I stood there petrified, unable to move. My mind gradually began to grow distant. I lacked even the strength to pull the signal net…

It was *me,* the boatswain who had orchestrated everything…

Somewhere in the distance, I heard the ringing of a temple bell…

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# World of Glass

Every corner of the world was made of glass.

The cities, the houses, the bridges, the forests and mountains, even the roadside trees—and of course the rivers and oceans—were all transparent, like crystals.

Wearing ice skates, I slid right through the center of the landscape, slid perfectly straight across a sidewalk of glass that continued to the horizon…forever…and ever…

A room inside of a building towering in the distance behind me was stained in bright red blood, which I could clearly see from the outside. No matter how many times I turned around and looked, the blood remained vivid. It was visible through the houses, the bridges, the rows of trees…because everything was made of glass….

Just moments ago, I killed a woman in that room. However, a famous detective had been watching my every move from atop a distant police tower, and as soon as he saw that room turn red from my horrific act he put on ice skates identical to mine and departed the police station, sliding towards my location. Making the best use of his skating talents…he came straight towards me, like an arrow being released from a bow…

The instant I saw the detective coming towards me, I began running for dear life. Using the same skating talents I went in a straight line… like an arrow…

Below the blue, blue sky…both the detective in pursuit and I, the one being chased, were transparent across the glistening, endless road…anxious for not being able to hide anywhere…

The detective gradually picked up speed. And so I too desperately kicked my toes into the road to gain speed…despite being only a step ahead of him a moment ago, now I felt my acceleration quickly widening the gap between us…

I turned so that I was sliding backwards, and opened my right hand. I put my thumb to my nose, waving four fingers as I mocked and insulted the detective who followed a distance away.

Even from far away, I could see the detective's face turn beet red as I watched. He must be gritting his teeth in frustration. There was something funny about the man waving both arms, as if drowning, as he kicked desperately at the glass sidewalk…*fuck you*, I thought, but I knew that if I let my guard down he would catch up, so I adeptly turned at a convenient place…until I was caught by surprise. Without realizing it, I had come to the end of the horizon…and below my feet was an endless void.

I panicked and tried desperately to prevent myself from falling. But I happened to slip and slam my body into the glass sidewalk, so I stretched out my blood-stained hands and tried to stop myself, but the tremendous inertia I had built up wouldn't permit that. My body slipped right off the edge of the horizon and fell headlong into infinite space.

I gritted my teeth and grasped at the air. I waved my hands and arms wildly, but failed to grab onto anything.

Right then, the detective's face peeked over the perfectly straight edge of the horizon. Staring down at me as I fell, he grinned widely, bearing white teeth.

"Now do you understand? From the beginning, it was my plan to drive you off of this world of glass."

I was lost for words.

Finally realizing I had been tricked, I covered my face with my hands in shame. Wailing loudly, I descended deeper and deeper into the infinite void.

*(This concludes the stories in English, and following this is the same set of stories in parallel English/Japanese. You may jump to the Acknowledgments at the end of the book here).*

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# The Foundry[1]

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( ) ( )

It is a frost-covered morning when[2] light begins to accumulate solemnly at the steel factory.

( ) ( ) ( )

It is the time when the massive crucible, where coke[3] has burned continually[4] for the last few days, glows bright red[5] like a setting sun in the darkness of the foundry.

( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

It is a period of several minutes when the needle of the boiler's pressure gauge shudders silently beneath the yellow lights, exceeding two hundred pounds.

( ) ( ) ( )

For the briefest of moments a terrible stillness can be felt permeating throughout the soot-caked building, the kind of stillness[6] found

thousands of meters underground.

…… …… ……

This moment of utter silence hints at an incomprehensible, ominous premonition…as if this very foundry is on the verge of rupturing…

( ) ( )
( )

I leisurely cross[7] my arms. Sneering at the absurd, unimaginable premonition deep in my mind, I gaze up at a window in the high ceiling. I look up at a chimney belching black smoke into the blue sky. Shaking my head vigorously back and forth, I'm struck with vertigo as if the diagonally slanted surface of the chimney, brightly reflecting the olive-colored light of the rising sun, is about to topple over onto me at any moment.

( ) ……
( ) ( ) ……

Because of my father's sudden death, I inherited this foundry despite being an inexperienced graduate fresh out of college…and I've just been brought here to lead the work personally for the first time in my life, anticipating the insults and curses of the workers towards their young, neophyte boss…

( )

But my indomitable spirit pushes away that ominous premonition into a place deep, deep in my mind. Holding a cigarette[8] lengthwise in my mouth with a vaguely smug attitude I walk around, observing the white breaths of the workers at their assigned stations.

( )

Before me a giant flywheel grins like a dark[9] rainbow.

( )

Beyond that, in the faint darkness remaining from last night, gears of various sizes spin, countless teeth meshing together.

……

With the grey arm of a piston rod jutting out…

( ) ( ) ……

A hydraulic rivet gun staring up at the attic…

……

One leg of a steam hammer being raised…

…… ( )

Everything[10] remains stubbornly silent as if in wait of my orders, prepared to fully[11] utilize terrific, supernatural forces and a certainty born from the principles of physics.

…… —— …… ( ) ……
……

A high-pitched whistle screams out somewhere…Is it the sound of steam escaping from the lips of a valve? Or a noise resounding deep in my head?

( ) ( )

Something powerful[12] runs down my spine. My right hand rises impulsively.

The foreman nods and goes away.

…… …… …… ( )

…Slowly…extremely[13] slowly…all of the machines clustered together in the foundry begin to gradually awaken.

Steam begins spraying from all corners of the foundry.

…… ( ) …… …… …… ……
…… …… …… …… …… ( ) ( )
( ) ( )

Then, a moment later…various unseen hallucinations of steel begin to spiral up around me in unison: humans…lunatics…super-humans[14]…wild animals…fierce beasts…monsters…giants…with the great roar of steel paying no mind to any of those…Cruel, cold-blooded moans of jet black fly [15]through every space, instantly luring even the strongest mind into a delusion of fear and death.

( ) ( ) ……

The echoes of spirits being ridiculed, the spirits of countless woman and child workers who have been torn apart, shredded, or beaten to death…

( ) ( ) ……

The voice of someone cursing the skull of that old worker who was recently crushed…

( ) ……

The sound of someone mocking the well-built man who had both of his legs broken long ago…

……

The hellish cacophony that cares only for the great battle between steel and fire, ignoring all life with a cold stare of indifference.

( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
( ) ( )

The suffocating screams of a circular saw from a distant wood mill cut through my neck and ears, swaying each and every hair on my head. The sounds also slice through the fingers, arms, and foreheads of the young workers. Even now, that blood spray remains as a black spot on the base of a wooden beam.

My father was considered by the community to be a lunatic. It was because he was an ugly, uneducated old man who glared at the world with savage steel-colored eyes who, once began, worked day and night without rest. He was this foundry's burden[16] and its pride, and at the same time an unending menace towards several[17] steel foundries.

( )
( ) ( )

That's why in this foundry there is never a single machine with the experience of losing a part of itself, let alone its existence. Bloody screams and sneers penetrate every inch[18] of the black walls and

ceiling. That is how passionate the workers are in this foundry. That is how sincere the machines are in this foundry.

……

…… …… ……

Moreover, to dominate everything, to despise every little thing—the iron, the blood, the flesh, and the souls—to make everything curse and fight amongst themselves like useless[19] junk…and to create afresh a great sneer of iron…*that*[20] was the ambition of my late father. And yet, it wasn't enough to satisfy me, to even draw a smile from me…

……

"What's[21] the big deal? I'll show you. This work is nothing but child's play…"

( ) ……

( ) …… ……

Arms crossed, I begin to walk slowly. I wonder how many more souls I will have to sacrifice to the steel…as I gradually become accustomed[22] to the terrible, deafening screams in this absurdly majestic foundry…grinning[23] as I imagine the most brutal of things, building up to my favorite moment of ecstasy…

"Oh, ch-chief it's you."

The voice, something close to a scream, comes from behind me.

…… ……

“…So we lost another person?”

( ) ( )

……

That instant, a great lucidity surges through my senses. As I slowly turn around, the massive sun-like crucible hanging from a crane passes uncomfortably close to my nose, glittering brightly as it scatters white sparks in all directions, ready to ignite whatever it touches…

( ) ( ) ( )

The light blinds[24] me. I step onto the mold of a pump, shattering it, and jump back. Every ounce[25] of my blood rushing into my heart, I stop when I slam into the door of a wood mill.

Five or six foundry workers run to come see me. Bowing their heads low, the workers apologize for their negligence.

( ) …… ( )

…… ……

My mouth gapes open as I look across at their faces…I keenly feel the cold air stinging the mild burns on their foreheads, cheeks, and noses…and I hear every last sound in the foundry jeering at me.

…… ……

“Ha ha ha!”[26]

“Hee hee hee!”

“Ho ho ho!”

“…Asshole, you deserved that!”

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# Midair

( )

The single-wing spy plane marked with the characters “T11” began to ascend at an unbelievably sharp angle, quickly gaining[27] distance from the green hills and plains.

…… …… ( ) ( )
( ) ( ) (
) …… ……

“…Hey…lieutenant, you’d be best to give up on that T11 monoplane. You may not know this since you’re a new dispatch, but two people have already disappeared while flying that thing. What’s more, that plane is a two-time felon[28], having returned mysteriously to the ground both times without a scratch. The motor and body were completely intact but nobody wanted to fly it, so we stuffed it into the attic…So just forget about it…”

( )

Before I knew it, both my commanding officer's words of warning and the concerned face of my colleagues had disappeared below the stratus clouds like a century's old[29] event. The next moment, the deep blue summer sky expanded above my head endlessly into the distance, glittering spectacularly in the fresh morning sun.

I was good at this.

( ) …… ……
……

Relying on nothing but my ability to precisely inspect each and every part of a plane, a keen sense of observation of the weather, and my experiences of overcoming all kinds of danger, I had dared to take this plane on such a sharp angle upwards simply to rebel against the superstition-like worries of my commander and colleagues…thinking to myself, "You think you can go to war with an attitude[30] like *that*?"

…… ( )
( )

And yet…as I broke through a part of the clouds that cooly flowed by, even my feelings of defiance disappeared without a trace. Then, once my altitude meter reached 2,500 meters, all that remained was the disturbingly silent buzz of my propeller and the subtle sensation of spark plugs firing in perfect timing.

……　　……

*This[31] T11[32] is utterly amazing.*

……　　……

*How can it be so silent, even though I've broken 300 kilometers per hour?*

……　　……

*Not to mention, on a day like this there shouldn't be any air pockets.*

……　　……

*If the clouds weren't here, I'd be surprising everyone[33] with some aerial acrobatics right about now.*

……
( )

While I was thinking this, adjusting the rudder for a slow climb, I suddenly realized that the shadow of my plane was tracing the shapes of the clouds two or three hundred meters below my feet, rising and lowering, as the plane slid along perfectly alongside the clouds.

( )

…… …… ……

Seeing that, even an experienced pilot like me couldn't help but feel an inexpressible joy. I had no choice but to wallow in the pure satisfaction that can only be attained in this place by a conqueror of the sky…as my heart throbbed quickly…and I truly felt like a kid again…

…… ……

*An altitude of 2,500 meters.*

…… ……

*The silent buzz[34] of a propeller.*

…… ……

*The subtle sensation of spark plugs firing in perfect timing.*

( ) …… ( )
( ) ( )

From my eyes dripped hot tears of having forgotten everything… tears of deep emotion for speeding alone through the blue sky, between the clouds and the sun…I blinked a few times behind my goggles to try and hold back the tears.

…… ……

*That's when I saw it.*

……

In the blue sky beyond my propeller, which glittered like an enormous mirror, appeared a tiny plane that enlarged before my very eyes…

I was astounded. It all happened so suddenly I first guessed it was a trick of the eye, but as I was thinking this the black shadow quickly grew in size, and the clear shape of a monoplane emerged.

( )

Preparing myself, I grabbed the yoke tightly.

…… ……

*An altitude of 2,500 meters.*

…… ……

*The silent buzz of a propeller.*

…… ……

*The subtle sensation of spark plugs firing in perfect timing.*

( ) ( ) ( )
……

I was shocked. Eyes wide, I held my breath. Coming towards me was a land-based spy plane identical[35] to mine in all respects. There even seemed to be a pilot on board. I couldn't see any markings or numbers on the plane, however…

…… ……

*An altitude of 2,500 meters.*

…… ……

*The silent buzz of a propeller.*

…… ……

*The subtle sensation of spark plugs firing in perfect timing.*

…… ……

*The sky.*

…… ……

*The sun.*

…… ……

*A sea of clouds.*

I yelled out in surprise.

( ) ( )

I jerked the yoke to the left to try and avoid the plane, but at the same time it turned in the same direction, showing me its dark left side while continuing to head straight towards me.

( ) …… ( )

My entire body broke out in a cold sweat. *This is crazy*[36]*,* I thought as I banked my plane to the right, but as if mimicking me the other plane also banked, now showing its brightly glimmering right side, still coming right at me.

…… ……

*Just like a reflection in a mirror.*

My entire body tensed up. My teeth started to rattle loudly.

…… ( )
( ) …… …… ……

Right then my plane began to tilt forward, apparently hitting a small air pocket…but at the same time the other plane also tilted forward, and in that instant…I could have sworn I saw “T11” written on it.

…… [37] ……

But the next moment, the other plane leveled out its wings just as I did, now on a direct course to smash directly into me.

……

*I flipped the switch…*

……

*…released the belt…*

……

*…and jettisoned from my seat.*

……　　(　)

I fell a hundred meters without my parachute[38] opening.

……　　……

In the same posture as me, without a parachute opening, was a person falling like a bullet who looked identical to me…staring at me with an identical face…

……　　……

*The endless blue sky.*

……　　……

*The blinding sun.*

…… ……

*The glistening yellow sea of clouds…*

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# On the Street[39]

( )

……

Tokyo, in the dead[40] of night.

( )
……

Exhausted from enjoying myself at a club, I was hobbling towards home alone, head hung low, when I suddenly looked up. Because something had suddenly brightened in the distance…

…… …… ( ) ……
…… …… ……

But the next moment, after I jumped aside in surprise from an ear-piercing siren, a single car flew by like a great gust of wind…A cloud of sand and the stink of gasoline followed in its wake, and as I watched, the number 4444 and the red light quickly shrunk to nothing.

…… …… ( ) ……
( ) ( ) ( ) …… ( )

( ) ( ) …… ( )

Well now…was the person in the passenger seat of that vehicle a doll? She had an unbelievably beautiful profile. I couldn't see her clothes, but her hair was tied back, shiny like a water droplet, her face covered with pure white powder, and her demeanor dead calm under the green lights…With eyes of onyx opened wide and a hint of a smile on her face, she stared directly ahead with the driver. The way she stuck out her chest and her calm attitude made her very doll-like…but just as I was thinking these thoughts another car came.

I immediately turned around to look.

( ) ( ) …… ( )
……

The person in the passenger seat of this vehicle was a gentleman with a Panama hat. With the typical reddish face and imposing physique of a wealthy person, he smiled and stared forward with the driver, leaning back slightly as their car sped by in front of me. The number on the car was 11111.

…… …… …… ……

He was a doll![41] That gentleman was certainly a doll…Well now… isn't this strange…

……

But as I was contemplating this, I gazed at the interior of another car that was coming, my body now stiff as a board.

…… ( ) ……

This time it was a Buddhist priest wearing a robe of gold brocade. A doll with a well-defined nose, like a graceful prince…Eyes slightly downcast and hands held together in prayer, he glided past me.

( ) …… ……

A chill ran down my spine. Around me was a quiet street…and the sky, filled with countless[42] stars…

…… …… ……

The mysteries of Tokyo in the dead of night…which I saw alone…

( ) ( )

I sensed something approaching me, an eerie, massive, terrible thing that was unexplainable. I picked up my pace in order to get home as soon as possible.

( )

Just then, two cars silently approached, one from the front and one from behind.

…… ……

*Me and…*

…… ……

*…the scene from the day of…*

…… ……

*…my dream wedding[43].*

I began running away. I hurried to the club's front entrance, and fell flat onto the doormat.

"Somebody help me!"

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# The Hospital

( )

( ) ( ) ( )
( )

Before I realized it, I had been put inside of a sturdy iron cage. Wearing a white calico gown like a hospital patient[44] and a white gauze wrapped around my body, I was left alone on the concrete with my arms and legs sprawled out on the floor.

……

I seem to be in a mental hospital.

( )
…… ( ) ( )
……

But I didn't panic[45]. I simply sat there in contemplation without making a sound. It was because, having known this was a mental hospital, there was no use making a fuss. It was very clear that the more noise I made, the more trouble I would get into. To make matters worse, it was nighttime. Despite apparently being a large hospital, there were no noises whatsoever…I can't make a fuss, I

can’t get angry. No. I can’t cry and I can’t laugh. Because that would convince everyone that I was truly insane.

( )

……

I slowly sat up in the middle of the concrete floor. Placing my hands upon my knees, I sat quietly with my eyes half closed, staring at the place where the steel poles of the cage were attached to the ground. I was trying[46] to calm my mind…

……

Sure enough, my mind quickly settled down to a state of calm, and a great silence swept through every inch of the hospital…

( )

( )

That’s when it happened—someone gradually approached from the other side of the bars before me. A young man, apparently lost in thought, wearing what appeared to be a white physician’s coat, walking slowly with a *tap-tap* upon the wooden floor that was situated about a foot above where I sat. The man halted suddenly when he reached the bars. Hands in pockets and apparently gazing down at me, the man’s feet came together and stopped directly below the level of my eyes[47].

I slowly turned my head to look upwards.

( ) ( ) ( ) …… ……
…… …… ( )

A set of striped pants with bulging knees and a physician's coat with dark stains came into view…But I had seen those striped pants and coat somewhere before…I closed my eyes in contemplation, but an instant later I had a sudden realization. I gazed up at his face, my eyes open wide.

…… …… ( ) …… ( ) ( ) ( ) …… ( ) ……

His face was just what I was expecting: pale and emaciated… disheveled hair…long, unkempt beard…dark, melancholy eyes cast down…like a suffering Jesus Christ…

…… ( )

It was me…it was undoubtedly me, from back when I was studying in the medical bureau of this hospital.

……

My chest began to pound. Then, a few moments later, it gradually calmed and returned to normal.

( )

The Milky Way flowing above the massive building standing behind this man suddenly twinkled, as if remembering[48] something.

…… ……

But at the same time, I felt as if all my questions had been answered. Indeed, I had been made a mental patient and put into this cage by my coat-wearing self who now stood outside of these bars. As a result of excessively researching his own brain, this coat-wearing version of me must have developed a mental condition, mistaken me for himself, and thrown me into this cage. Had only this “coat-wearing me” not existed, I would have never been treated like an insane person.

…… …… ……

When I realized this, I couldn’t help but become enraged. Losing control, I stared hard at myself outside of the bars and screamed out, “Why the hell did you come here? You despicable[49]…”

( ) ( )

My voice reverberated loudly throughout the hospital, bouncing around as it gradually died down. However, the facial expression of me outside the bars didn’t change at all. Hands stuffed into the

pockets of a physician's coat, the man stared down at me with sorrowful eyes like Jesus, answering with a quiet, but clear voice.

"I came to see you[50]."

My anger only intensified.

…… …… ……

"…There's no need to visit me. You asshole…go home now, and get back to studying for your job!"

…… ( ) ……
( )

While listening to the echoes of my harsh voice, I had the sensation of my eyes burning with tears…without knowing why…but on the thin lips of my other self I detected a sneer, as if he had finally calmed down.

…… ……

"Observing you like this *is* my job. As soon as you completely lose your mind, my research will be complete…and I think it's almost time…"

…… ( ) …… …… …… …… ……

“You[51] devil! How dare you treat me like your plaything and try to kill me! Y-you cold-blooded…”

…… ……

“Science is always cold-blooded…”

…… ( ) ……

He laughed[52], brandishing white teeth, then suddenly looked up at the sky…as if about to say something of great import…

( ) ( )

I went into a rage, jumping[53] up and thrusting both hands outside the cage. I grabbed hold of the collar of his white gown and twisted it.

…… …… …… …… …… …… ……
…… ( ) ……

“…Now…you get me out…immediately…from this cage…and we can finish your research together…alright? Alright? For the sake of God[54]…”

( ) ( )

Hot tears choked me. I swallowed, washing the salty liquid down my throat.

…… …… …… …… …… ……

Yet the coat-wearing version of myself did not resist nor try to escape. Then, while being grabbed by the gown-wearing me, he said painfully, “No way…you’re my…precious…guinea pig…I can’t let you out.”

…… …… ……

“What…what…did you…”

…… …… ……

“If I…let you out…my experiment will be ruined…”

I found my hands loosening up on his collar. Then I drew his face right up to me and stared intently at it.

……

“…What? Say that one more time!”

( )

……

“It doesn’t matter how many times I say it. I have to keep you locked up in this cage until you are driven completely insane. Reporting the entire course of events is the topic of my doctoral dissertation, for the sake of the state…”

…… …… …… ……

“…Alright…suit…yourself…asshole…”

( ) ( ) …… ……

But before I finished speaking, I grabbed hold of his disheveled hair and struck him right between the eyes. I took his body, now limp and dripping with blood, and thrust it away with all my might. The body made a terrible *thump* in the late night hallway, sprawling[55] out onto the floor. He ceased all movement, as if breathing his last breath.

…… …… ……

“That’s what you get!” I said and laughed uncontrollably.

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# Seven Seaweed Plants

( )

……

……

I dived down quietly, oh so quietly towards the bottom of the gloomy, silvery blue ocean that stretched below the cloudy sky. I was acting on orders from the authorities to ascertain the whereabouts of the *All Last*[56], a ship that had sunk with a load of gold coins…

——

……

The air pressure inside of my diving suit gradually rose, and my ears began to ring. My heartbeat throbbed inside my skull with a muddled *flub-flub* sound. At the same time, I felt[57] the silence around me deepen further…

…… ……

Like the bell of a temple ringing somewhere in the distance…

Chunks of gray seaweed floated up towards the surface. Following those came a school of tiny fish, also gray, swimming upwards in an orderly line until they gradually disappeared.

My vision began to progressively darken.

…… ( )

Finally a true darkness fell, a darkness so thick that I couldn’t even see my own hands, and before long my heavy shoes seemed to have touched down softly onto the mud of the ocean floor.

I pulled the signaling net and notified my companions[58] at the surface.

( )

I began walking slowly, guided by the electric light attached to my scuba helmet. I passed over innumerable gray sand dunes formed from gentle, rounded curves.

……

( ) …… …… ( )

…… …… ……

Yet no matter how far I went, there were only the same low, round hills of sand, with no sign of even a shell in any direction, let alone a ship. What's more, after I walked a little further, I realized my surroundings were filled with a faint pale glow reminiscent of phosphorus. It was something like a desert at twilight…or the road to the land of the dead, uncertain…and eerie…

……

I began to quietly change direction. It was because of a premonition of some unfortunate event waiting for me on my current course…But before I finished turning, my entire body suddenly stiffened up.

( ) ( )

Out of the corner of my eye I caught sight of a forest of extremely oddly shaped seaweed plants that had seemingly appeared out of nowhere, standing disturbingly close[59] to me in front of the endlessly rolling sand dunes.

…… …… ( ) …… ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ……

A forest of seaweed…varying in height from around one to three meters[60]. Each was oval-shaped like sargassum, with a round head…and was attached to the ocean floor with thin strings tied to its roots. The plants overlapped one another and stood vertically in

rows, like tombstones. In the pale phosphorescent light the black plants stood out clearly…I counted seven in total.

(  )  (  )

I was dumbfounded. Heart throbbing quickly within my chest, I slowly withdrew a few[61] steps.

(  )

A moment later, I heard the faint sound of a human voice coming from the closest plant within the group of massive seaweed.

It was a low-pitched, hoarse voice.

……

“Hello there[62]…”

I felt each and every bone in my body freeze up like ice. At the same time, despite not knowing the source of the voice, I was overtaken with the feeling of having encountered an unimaginably terrible monster, so I continued backing away, even more slowly. Then I

heard a muddy, listless voice coming from a seaweed plant on the right.

…… ( ) ……

“You must have come…in search of the gold coins.”

…… ( ) ……

The throbbing in my chest suddenly intensified. Then it suddenly stopped without a sound…having realized that something even more terrible than a monster was glaring this way…

But then I heard a sad, gentle voice coming from the shortest, most distant plant of the group.

…… ( ) …… …… …… ( ) ……

“We aren’t monsters. We are from the ship *All Last* that you seek… the bodies of the captain and his wife, their one child…one first mate…and three sailors. The captain is the man you just spoke to, and I am his wife. Please understand…and the one who first called to you was the first mate.”

…… ……

“…Please listen to us…we three were all allies of the captain of the *All Last*,” said another worn-down voice.

…… ( ) ( )
( )

“We were shot and killed by the heartless crew of the *All Last,* thrown into canvas bags, doused with turpentine and tar, our feet bound with heavy weights, and made into bait for the creatures of the sea.”

……

I remained silent[63].

…… …… ( ) ( ) ( )

“…and then…some other people fooled everyone by scattering pieces of a ship onto the waves and making it look like our ship had sunk.”

……

I said nothing.

…… ( ) ( ) ( )
…… ……

“…of those, the asshole who was the lead conspirator purposefully went back to his hometown’s police station and lied about everything, saying that he was the only person who managed to survive…and telling everyone that the ship sank here…”

……

“It’s true! That guy…he strangled me right in front of my mother and father. I’m certain you know[64] *full well* who he is.”

( ) ……
( )

The last person spoke with the adorable, yet sad voice of a young girl. The voice likely came from within the shortest bag in the group…Then everything went dead quiet, except for the sound of the voice of soft weeping permeating throughout the sea.

……

I stood there petrified, unable to move. My mind gradually began to grow distant. I lacked even the strength to pull the signal net…

……

It was *me,* the boatswain who had orchestrated everything…

……　　……

Somewhere in the distance, I heard[65] the ringing of a temple bell…

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# World of Glass

( )

( ) ( )

Every corner of the world was made of glass.

The cities[66], the houses, the bridges, the forests and mountains, even the roadside trees—and of course the rivers and oceans—were all transparent, like crystals.

( ) ( ) …… ……
……

Wearing ice skates, I slid right through the center of the landscape, slid perfectly straight across a sidewalk of glass that continued to the horizon…forever…and ever…

( ) ( )
…… ……

A room inside of a building towering in the distance behind me was stained in bright red blood, which I could clearly see from the outside. No matter how many times I turned around and looked, the blood remained vivid. It was visible through the houses, the bridges, the rows of trees…because everything was made of glass…

…… ( )

……

Just moments ago, I killed a woman in that room. However, a famous detective had been watching my every move from atop a distant police tower, and as soon as he saw that room turn red from my horrific act he put on ice skates identical to mine and departed the police station, sliding towards my location. Making the best use of his skating talents…he came straight towards me, like an arrow being released from a bow…

…… …… ……

The instant I saw the detective coming towards me, I began running for dear life. Using the same skating talents I went in a straight line… like an arrow…

…… ……

……

Below the blue, blue sky…both the detective in pursuit and I, the one being chased, were transparent across the glistening, endless road…anxious for not being able to hide anywhere…

……

……

The detective gradually picked up speed. And so I too desperately kicked my toes into the road to gain speed…despite being only a step ahead of him a moment ago, now I felt my acceleration quickly widening the gap between us…

( ) ( )

I turned so that I was sliding backwards, and opened my right hand. I put my thumb to my nose, waving four fingers as I mocked and insulted the detective who followed a distance away.

( ) ( )

( ) …… ……

…… ……

Even from far away, I could see the detective's face turn beet[67] red as I watched. He must be gritting his teeth in frustration. There was something funny about the man waving both arms, as if drowning, as he kicked desperately at the glass sidewalk…*fuck you*, I thought, but I knew that if I let my guard down he would catch up, so I adeptly turned at a convenient place…until I was caught by surprise. Without realizing it, I had come to the end of the horizon…and below my feet was an endless void.

( ) ( )

( )

I panicked and tried desperately to prevent myself from falling. But I happened to slip and slam my body into the glass sidewalk, so I stretched out my blood-stained hands and tried to stop myself, but the tremendous inertia I had built up wouldn’t permit that. My body slipped right off the edge of the horizon and fell headlong into infinite space.

I gritted my teeth and grasped at the air. I waved my hands and arms wildly, but failed to grab onto anything.

Right then, the detective’s face peeked over the perfectly straight edge of the horizon. Staring down at me as I fell, he grinned widely, bearing white teeth.

…… ( )

“Now do you understand? From the beginning, it was my plan to drive you off of this world of glass.”

……

I was lost for words.

……

Finally realizing I had been tricked[68], I covered my face with my hands in shame. Wailing loudly, I descended deeper and deeper into the infinite void.

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# Other Works

The following works are also published by Arigatai Books:

“The Spirit Drum” by Kyusaku Yumeno

"Classic Japanese Fairy Tales" by Mimei Ogawa, a five-book series [published in parallel English / Japanese]

“Language Motivation: Tips and inspirations for language learning” by J.D. Wisgo

"Fast Forward Japan: Stories by the Founding Father of Japanese Science Fiction" by Juza Unno

"The Masquerade Ball" by Edogawa Rampo: Master of Classic Japanese Mystery, Volume 1

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[1] The title (  ) here is a word that can be literally translated to “factory”, but the title “The Foundry” was chosen because the story is about a place where iron or steel is created (  ), which is effectively a type of factory.

[2] The first sentence here sounds arguably a bit awkward, but it is fitting because it begins an unusual story in an unusual way. Adjusting the sentence to read “In the frost-covered morning…” might sound better, but it breaks the parallel structure with the second and third paragraphs, which is important to retain. Also, the literal rendering of the first phrase, “gradually brightens solemnly”, has an unnatural ring to it, so this was replaced with the more literary sounding “light begins to accumulate solemnly”.

[3] Here “coke” (  in the original text) is not a reference to the soft drink, but rather the substance used as fuel that comes from heating coal or oil, used for melting iron in foundries.

[4] While the original text says  (“continued to burn”), this has been rendered using the adverb “continually” for a more natural flow.

[5] The original text here does not specifically say “red”, but rather uses the verb  which refers to something being “ripe”.

[6] In the original text the word for “stillness”, “  ”, is used only once. But by repeating it in the translation an agreeable rhythm is obtained.

[7] This story, like the others in this book, is comprised of a mix of past and non-past tenses (Japanese doesn’t have a specific ‘present’ tense). However, for this story the subjective call was made to render a majority of the prose in present tense, primarily in order to give a sense of immediacy and heightened tension. The other stories have generally been rendered into the past tense, though they could have just as easily been rendered in the present.

[8] The original text here, “  ” is probably a reference to “Golden Bat”, a type of cigarette that has been around since the early 1900s.

[9] The text here has “ ”, a word that normally means “black”. But it can also mean “dark”, a meaning that fits more with the context here.

[10] The author frequently uses ellipses in these stories. While ellipses were retained when deemed to be critically important, in some places they have been omitted. The beginning of this paragraph is one such place.

[11] The text here uses “ ” (hyaku paasento), a mixed loanword that comes from “100 percent”.

[12] The text here literally says, “a certain power”, but “something powerful” was used instead since it flows better in English.

[13] In the text, the “extremely” part is used with the first instance of “slowly”, but in English this adverb was moved to the second instance of “slowly” since it sounds more natural.

[14] The term has the connotation of someone with abnormal powers, such as Superman.

[15] This text has that literally means “roll around”.

[16] The text here refers to a cross, like that carried by Jesus Christ.

[17] The text here literally says “several tens of foundries”, but since this turn of phrase is a bit awkward in English it has been simplified to “several”.

[18] The text uses the expression “ ” which was rendered in the natural expression “every inch”, even though inches are generally not used in Japan (which primarily uses the metric system).

[19] The original text here says “ ” which literally means little fragments of wood (wood chips), but this term can also be used to express that something is useless or of little value.

[20] The italics here are used to express the emphasis on “that” that is implied by the particle. By the way, generally italics are not used in Japanese.

[21] The original text uses the word “ ”, a drawn-out version of the word “ ”. While this literally means “what”, when used at the beginning of a dialog line it can have the nuance of disregarding someone’s concern or worry.

[22] The text here literally translates to “…accustom (my) ears to (the) screams…”

[23] This text here literally translates to “…making (my) extremely brutal fantasy smile…”. This sentence was adjusted slightly to give more natural phrasing in English.

[24] The original text here can be literally translated as “My eyes are blinded”, but this passive sentence lacks impact in a key part of the story. Instead “The light blinds me” was chosen since it expresses the same idea with more conviction and better flow.

[25] The original text “ ” literally means “all of the blood in (my) body”.

[26] Japanese is generally well-suited for expressing a variety of sounds that would otherwise not be as easily or commonly expressed in English. In this part, we have eight different styles of laughter with different nuances. While it would be possible to try and find the closest equivalent , the result would not likely be very natural in English. Instead, it was decided to use three common expressions for expressing laughter.

[27] The original text for this part uses the compound verb “ ” (keotosu), which literally means to kick something down. It can also be used metaphorically as in pushing someone down to gain power.

[28] The text here uses the term “ ”, a term used to describe stuff for sale, but also as a way to describe some person or thing in a disparaging way.

[29] The text here “ ” refers to an old period of time in a vague sense, literally “the old century”.

[30] The text here does not explicitly contain the word “attitude”, and can be translated literally as, “Can (you) go to war with something like that?” But the “you think” part was added to capture the sarcastic tone of the particle here.

[31] The ellipses in the original text here are more about marking the text as special, as opposed to ellipses that show some thought was not being fully expressed (ex: “I knew he would…”). Therefore, italics were used for many of the sentences that have such ellipses like this at both the beginning and end.

[32] The original text just says “11”, but “T11” has been used in the translation since it is clear the original “T11” is being referred to.

[33] The original text does not specify “everyone”, it instead omits the object and this is merely implied. Also, the verb which is normally used when someone does a favor for the speaker is instead used in a slang sense with the nuance that something unexpected will be performed by the speaker to another party.

[34] This part literally says “the inspiration of sparks in good condition”. From context it seems likely that the “spark” is a reference to the plane engine’s spark plugs, and by using a little artistic license we come up the translation shown.

[35] The text is literally phrased as “…that didn’t have the slightest difference.”

[36] The text here “ ” literally means “Such a stupid thing…” with the implication that “Such a stupid thing (cannot be)”.

[37] The text here says “ ” that literally indicates the collision took place. However, given the context it is clear that the collision did not actually take

place, but instead was on the verge of occurring.

[38] The English translation accurately expresses the original Japanese sentence, which is vague about whether the parachute actually opened. But from the context we can guess it never did.

[39] While the original title literally means “street”, making the English title that single word sounds awkward, and “The street” is not ideal due to several other stories with a similar “The …” pattern. Therefore, to add some variation the title “On the Street” was chosen.

[40] The text here literally translates to “midnight”, but in the translation the phrase “dead of night” was used for dramatic effect.

[41] Here, the repetition in the original text was expressed with an exclamation point (a form of punctuation not used as frequently in Japanese).

[42] The text here is literally “The great sky was filled with stars”, but “countless” was added for dramatic effect.

[43] This is quite a sudden turn of events, and the connection between the main character’s dream wedding and the story so far may be a little unclear. But it at least appears that the first car is his dream bride, the second (the rich-looking gentlemen) his dream self, and the third is the Buddhist priest who would preside over a wedding ceremony.

[44] The original text avoids a simile and instead uses the word “ ”, which represents a typical patient outfit.

[45] Here the text literally says “I wasn’t surprised”, but using “panic” sounds more natural given the context.

[46] The text here literally says “with the intention to calm (my) mind…”

[47] The original text here uses the phrase “ ”, literally “below my upper eyelid”. But in context it can be interpreted as simply meaning slightly below the level of the main character’s eyes.

[48] While arguably sounding slightly unnatural, this phrase is a literal translation of the original text and helps to add to the disturbing atmosphere.

[49] The text here uses “ ”, a second pronoun with a particularly distasteful nuance. This is conveyed in the translation with not only the word “despicable”, but also with the word “hell”.

[50] The word “you” is expressed in the text as “ ”, a second person pronoun with a bit of a rough nuance. Generally this sort of speech would never be used towards a patient. Also, normal instead of polite verb forms are used by both parties here.

[51] Here “ ” is used, which can be used both as a first-person pronoun as well as a second person pronounce with a disparaging nuance.

[52] In the original text the laugh is part of the dialog ( ), but in the translation it has been turned into a description that arguably sounds more natural. This technique is used in a few other places in these stories.

[53] Here the literal “…suddenly standing up..” was rendered as the simpler “..jumped up..”, since “jumped” already has the nuance of being done suddenly.

[54] The original text uses the word “ ”, which is a reference to the afterlife. The nuance here is to do something desperately for the sake of the afterlife, often used as a plea.

[55] Here the text describes the body as “ ”, which literally means “became long”, but can be interpreted to mean the body was sprawled out on the floor limply.

[56] Here the ship's name "　　" is possibly a reference to the last session of a game of Mahjong that came from the words "all" and "last".

[57] Here, the verb "felt" is omitted (normally it would go where the ellipses are), but from the context it can be inferred. Because of word order differences, translating into English using a sentence where the end is cut off (but implied) is a bit tricky, so the entire sentence is specified.

[58] The word in the text, "　" can express both one or multiple companions (since plural is often not expressed in Japanese), but the latter was chosen since it is more likely.

[59] The text here says "　　", which literally means "In front of (the) nose behind me". However, a literal interpretation here doesn't make sense, and the phrase should instead be understood as meaning "very close behind me".

[60] The text here literally says "5-6 *shaku* to 1 *jou*", where one *shaku* is around 0.3 meters and one *jou* is around 3.0 meters.

[61] The text here has "　" which literally means "two or three steps", but "　" can also be used to mean simply a small number of something (i.e. "a few").

[62] "　　" is a phrase that is used most commonly in modern Japanese as a greeting on the telephone, but it can also be used to get someone's attention when not on the phone (like when a stranger in front of you has dropped something).

[63] In the original text an empty dialog line with ellipsis is used, which is somewhat common in Japanese. However, because this is not very common in English, the empty dialog line was rendered as explanatory text. In other places, the same empty dialog line is rendered differently to avoid repetition that might be more noticeable than repeated empty dialog lines in Japanese.

[64] The original text has emphasis via the katakana expression of the word “ ”, plus the irony of the extra-polite verb “ ”. These things are expressed in the translation using italics.

[65] The text here literally translates to “…Somewhere, like a temple bell ringing…” This was changed to use the first person “I” and a complete sentence for a stronger effect at the end of the story.

[66] The order of the items in this list has been changed from the original text for better flow throughout the sentence. The Japanese sentence begins with “Of course the rivers and oceans…”

[67] The “beet” part is not literally in the original text that reads “ ”, a word specifying a pure red color.

[68] The verb in the original text, “ ” is often used to mean “to measure” or “to judge”, but it can also have the nuance of deceiving.

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